

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 10813

FROM AMBASSADOR LODGE'S OFFICE

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, VT
SUBJECT: NEW HIGH VATICAN OFFICIAL: MONSIGNOR GIUSEPPE CAPRIO

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED

1. ON JUNE 27 MONSIGNOR GIUSEPPE CAPRIO ASSUMED HIS DUTIES AS
VATICAN SUBSTITUTE SECRETARY OF STATE--THE NUMBER TWO ADVISER
TO THE POPE.

2. MONSIGNOR CAPRIO IS A VATICAN DIPLOMAT. HE WAS BORN IN
LAPIO, ITALY NOVEMBER 15, 1914. HE RECEIVED DIPLOMAS IN
THEOLOGY AND CANON LAW FROM THE GREGORIAN PONTIFICAL UNIVERSITY
(ROME), AND WAS ORDAINED A PRIEST DECEMBER 17, 1938. AFTER
STUDYING DIPLOMACY AT THE PONTIFICAL ECCLESIASTICAL ACADEMY,
HE WAS ASSIGNED FOR 5 YEARS IN THE SECRETARIAT OF STATE. HE
THEN SERVED SUCCESSIVELY AS VATICAN DIPLOMAT IN PEKING
(1947-1951); BRUSSELS (1951); THE APOSTOLIC DELEGATION IN
SAIGON; NUNCIO IN TAIPEI (1961-1967) AND PRO NUNCIO IN NEW DELHI
(1967-1969). HE SPEAKS ITALIAN, FRENCH, CHINESE AND ENGLISH.
MONSIGNOR CAPRIO SINCE 1969 HAS BEEN THE SECRETARY FOR
ADMINISTRATION OF THE PATRIMONY OF THE APOSTOLIC SEE, I.E.
MINISTER OF POPE'S TREASURY, A POWERFUL POSITION WITH
DIRECT ACCESS TO POPE PAUL.

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END UNCLASSIFIED

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3. COMMENT: WE SHARE ASSESSMENT OF MOST VATICAN OBSERVERS
THAT THE SELECTION OF MONSIGNOR CAPRIO TO BE THE NEW "SOSTITUTO,"

OR DEPUTY PREMIER, IS POPE'S SIGNAL OF "CONTINUITY" IN MAJOR VATICAN POLICIES. THIS IS BASED ON THE LONG STANDING, CLOSE ASSOCIATION WHICH CAPRIO HAS HAD WITH BOTH POPE PAUL AND MONSIGNOR BENELLI. IN THE 1940'S WHEN POPE PAUL (THEN MONSIGNOR MONTINI) WAS THE UNDERSECRETARY OF STATE, BENELLI WAS MONTINI'S ASSISTANT AND CAPRIO WAS BENELLI'S ASSISTANT. THOSE CLOSE PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS WERE RE-ESTABLISHED IN 1969 AND CONTINUED TO THE PRESENT. CAPRIO HAS THE REPUTATION OF BEING A HARD-WORKING, QUIET AND EFFICIENT PRELATE. IN OUR CONTACTS, CAPRIO DISPLAYS A MORE RELAXED STYLE THAN MONSIGNOR BENELLI. AT LEAST INITIALLY, INsofar AS FORIEGN POLICY IS CONCERNED, FOREIGN MINISTER CASAROLI'S STATUS HAS BEEN SOMEWHAT UPGRADED. BENELLI HAD KEPT A TIGHT REIGN ON ALL ASPECTS OF VATICAN POLICY, INCLUDING FOREIGN POLICY.

END CONFIDENTIALGARDNER

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